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Doobies' clockwork band pumps programme music

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ for The Gazette

The Doobie Bros. rock sextet performed at the Forum on Saturday night and attracted about 9,000 fans — not the biggest crowd, but not the smallest, either.

The Doobies are stars, but not superstars (not enough charisma). They're not to be scoffed, at either. Their records have sold millions worldwide. They don't pawn mystique. Just hard work, in the form of boogie-blues-rock — the reward has been gold records.

In connection with that, a little Acapulco Gold or any other weed or alcohol doesn't do the Doobies any harm. Their music is, after all, for GETTIN' OFF. Whether you're bozoed, doped, or STRAIGHT — the Doobies aim to get you off.

They do it by achieving an indefatigable pace. These fellows fill up your ears with sound, plenty of notes. They've got it all memorized. It sounds much like the records, perhaps a little more immediate.

They opened Saturday with Jesus Is Just Alright. With Me, done with true hippie-speed fervor. Immediately, they turned out two machine-like "out-of-control" guitar solos that simply consisted of simple patterns being flicked off at metronomic speeds. The number proceeded with a brief dual-drum duel, each drummer relaxing while the other zipped off riffs, and ended with a firebomb, to reenforce the fact that the song had intfeed ended.

They're a faceless band (don't ask me the names, I just don't know) but in this age of posers and jaded superstars, The Doobies' proletarian rock style is to be reckoned with.

Like BTO, Bad Company, ZZ Top, Lynyard Skynyard, and others, their sound is programmed energy. Simple enough to be appreciated at a root level by anyone yet not totally simplistic: this is obviously a together band on stage.

The Doobies are so tight, whether performing the revivalist Listen To The Music or the hand-charging sentimental Take Me In Your Arms (Rock Me A Little While), that they seem like a clockwork band. They jump around, flail their hair about, and in general make a lot of well-controlled noise. Often the solos are boring and pre-determined, but at least they move along at a steady clip (even in the slow numbers.)

Ah, rock 'n' roll, what's happening to it? I knew these faceless longhaired rocksters are probably just as buzzed at playing before big crowds as Carl Perkins was way back then.

The opening acts were Trooper and the Outlaws, from the west of Canada and the U.S. respectively. They were tight or uptight, depending upon how you hear things. But don't take them too lightly — they might take over after the Doobies have faded into obscurity.

UPI Wirephoto

Right hoof of third horse (left) of the Neptune quadriga was smashed, as were two fingers from the hand of the figure (right) in the Rape of the Sabines

Vandals strike Florence museum; Thieves rob Sicilian church's art

FLORENCE — (AP) — Vandals damaged the Fountain of Neptune and two statues in the historic centre of this museum city Saturday, striking another blow at Italy's art heritage.

Art experts examined the damaged works to determine whether they can be restored.

Police did not know the vandals' identity or whether they had any specific motive.

At the city's request, police agreed to increase patrols after museum closing times to safeguard Florence's vast art treasures.

In Sicily, meanwhile, thieves broke into the sacristy of a church near Enna and carried away gold and silver religious objects.

But Rome police said they recovered seven stolen paintings worth $3.2 million and arrested four persons.

In the Florence vandalism, semiaction-men sweeping up the Piazza della Signoria at dawn discovered a horse's head broken off from the famous fountain built by Ammannati, Giambologna and other Italian masters between 1563 and 1575.

SMASHED

Two fingers were also broken off another Giambologna work in the square, his Rape of the Sabine Women, completed in 1582, while a finger and lie were smashed on the Rape of Polyxena, sculptured by Pio Fedi in 1866.

The Piazza della Signoria, a major tourist attraction, is in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, once home of the Medici dukes and now a museum-palace housing the city government.

Thieves and vandals have been pilfering Italy's art for years, usually raiding unguarded churches and museums.

The most serious instance of vandalism occurred in 1972 when a Hungarian took a hammer to Michelangelo's Pieta in view of hundreds of persons in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

The statue has been fully restored, but now sits behind a bullet-proof glass shield.

Police estimate that last year more than 10,000 works of art were stolen, double the 1972 number.

TV future is grim, executive believes

OTTAWA — (CP) — The future of Canadian television is not bright, says Ernest Bushnell who predicts that within five years there will be a national cable television company importing United States programs.

Canadian television stations just are not able to compete with American-produced "audience-getters," said the former CBC vice-president and honorary chairman of Bushnell Communications. The latter company has a long history of involvement in television and radio broadcasting in the Ottawa area.

"I bet in five years there will be a national cablevision company for the importation of American programs, and revenues f private companies will go down.

MONEY SCARCE

"TV is entertainment and that's what people want — it's as simple as that. A program can be well-made and educational, but people won't watch it if it isn't very interesting."

He said Canadian programs are not as popular as those in the U.S. because the Canadian industry lacks the money to produce quality programming.

If a Canadian company has $1 million to spend, after overhead and other expenses, about one-half is spent on news and public affairs, leaving little to produce an "audience-getter", such as Cannon or Kojak."

He also said that setting a mandatory percentage of Canadian content for television programming is not wise economically.

"I'm against percentages of Canadian content because they present economic problems. Radio stations can be obliged to use a certain number of Canadian discs a day which might be poor quality, but in television you're obliged to present 60-per-cent Canadian content in over-all program planning."

He suggested that private companies not "throw spending money away" on afternoon programs when only a small segment of the viewing population is watching.

"They should buy shows from one another to distract Canadian viewers from U.S. productions."

Chattanooga's Choo Choo finds success as a motel

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — (AP) — The Chattanooga Choo Choo stopped running from Pennsylvania Station's Track 29 several years ago and even Amtrak, the National Rail Passenger Service, no longer serves this city.

But, running or not, the Chattanooga Choo Choo is thriving — as a motel-restaurant in the old Southern Railway station that once bustled with passengers.

It has been two years since the entertainment centre opened. It has drawn more than 2.5 million visitors and put smiles on the faces of 24 investors who remember how some people laughed at the original idea.

A success from the start, the Choo Choo is adding a convention centre that will accommodate up to 1,500, a concert hall and a new entertainment centre.

"We hope to bring in headline entertainment," said B. Allen Casey, board chairman.

It was Casey who talked 22 others into investing a maximum $180,000 each to launch what was then described as a $6-million project. As more facilities are added, the development becomes even more valuable.

"When we started, we aimed at the tourist business," Casey said.

"But so many people told us they wanted to have their conventions here that we decided to build a convention centre."

When completed, the new convention and entertainment facilities will complement a huge dining area in the old terminal building, row upon row of shops, 44 converted train cars that now contain plush, Victorian sleeping quarters and a modern, 100-room Hilton Motor Inn with an indoor, all-seather swimming pool. The Inn also is slated for expansion.

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